

USDA Announcement
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WASHINGTON, May 26, 2005---The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is extending the comment period on a notice seeking public comment about the national animal identification system (NAIS).

"We are extending the comment period for the national animal identification system draft strategic plan and draft program standards so that all interested parties have time to prepare and submit information for our evaluation," said Dr. Ron DeHaven, APHIS Administrator.

A comprehensive description of NAIS system standards will be determined over time through field trials, user experience and the federal rulemaking process. However, the draft documents currently available lay out in more detail projected timelines and potential avenues to achieve system milestones. For example, the draft documents propose requiring stakeholders to identify premises and animals according to NAIS standards by January 2008. Requiring full recording of defined animal movements is proposed by January 2009.

Originally published in the Federal Register on May 6, the notice of availability about these documents acknowledges the outstanding concerns of some stakeholders and frames questions for which USDA will be seeking answers as it moves forward with the NAIS. These questions pertain to funding for the system, confidentiality of data in the system and flexibility of the system, among other things.

Notice of the comment period extension was published in the May 20 Federal Register. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before July 6, 2005. Send an original and three copies of postal or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. 05-015-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. If you wish to submit a comment using the Internet, an easy link to the NAIS docket and comment form is available on the NAIS home page at <http://www.usda.gov/nais>.

Once USDA receives feedback on the documents, it will follow the normal rulemaking process before any aspects of the NAIS become mandatory. The public will have the opportunity to submit additional comments on any proposed regulations.

Comments are posted on the EDOCKET Web site and may also be viewed at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS news release page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/news/press.html>. Also, anyone with an -mail address can sign up to receive APHIS press releases automatically. Send an e-mail message to lyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov and leave the subject blank. In the message, typesubscribe press_releases.

Please note: This email is being sent to COSDA members as well as to State Vets, AVICs, and a list of interested stakeholders who have requested NAIS information from APHIS Legislative and Public Affairs.

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